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UNIDO and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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Report by the Director General

The present document provides information on the contribution of UNIDO to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is written in line with General Conference resolutions GC.15/Res.1 and GC.16/Res.2, and in accordance with conclusion 2016/6 of the Programme and Budget Committee and decision IDB.44/Dec.9 paragraph (e) (i) of the Industrial Development Board, requesting the Director General and the Secretariat to enhance the dialogue and liaise with representatives of Member States on UNIDO's contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the high-level political forum (HLPF). This report builds on the update by the Director General on the implementation of the Lima Declaration in document GC.16/7, which provided an action plan for supporting and monitoring progress towards achieving inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID), as a concrete follow-up to the industry-related development goals of the 2030 Agenda. The present document also includes UNIDO activities in support of least developed countries (LDCs) and the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III).

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I. Overview

1. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) report 2018[1] notes that while people overall are living better lives than they were a decade ago, progress to ensure that no one is left behind has not been rapid enough to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda. Three in 10 people lack access to safely managed drinking water service (Goal 6). Youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, with the global youth unemployment rate at 13 per cent in 2017 (Goal 8). One billion people are still living without electricity (Goal 7), while the five-year average global temperature from 2013 to 2017 is the highest on record (Goal 13).

2. There continue to be calls for the decoupling of economic growth from resource use, urging for policies that will create an enabling environment for such change (Goal 12). Competitive economic forces also need to be unleashed to generate employment and income, facilitate international trade and enable the efficient use of resources to achieve inclusive and sustainable industrialization (Goal 9). Where progress has been slow, development stakeholders have been urged to intensify their efforts (Goal 16).

3. The SDGs are interlinked by nature, and it is clear that integrated approaches will be needed to ensure that progress is made towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Cognizant of this, UNIDO's medium-term programme framework (MTPF), with its stated management objective of integration and scale-up, promulgates the harnessing of synergies across UNIDO's four core functions with the aim of moving towards programmes that will deliver a higher development impact. The integrated results and performance framework supports UNIDO in measuring, monitoring and reporting on its contribution to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda, and to the SDGs that are relevant to the Organization's mandate.

II. Follow-up and review at the global level

4. At the global level, and as part of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, the Industrial Development Board of UNIDO submits inputs to the HLPF. Following last year's submission[2], in which the role of industrialization for development and poverty reduction was highlighted, the Board's input to the HLPF 2018[3] concentrated on the nexus between affordable and clean energy (Goal 7) and ISID. The submission also showed how ISID encompassed the promulgation of growth within an environmentally sustainable framework, decoupling industrial activities from negative environmental impacts and natural resource use. ISID also embraces the 2030 Agenda principle of "leave no one behind" by promoting equal opportunities and equitable distribution of the benefits of industrialization.

5. The inputs provided by the IDB to the HLPF 2018 showed how the reviewed SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, and 17 were vital for the achievement of ISID, and vice versa. It emphasized the following aspects:

(a) Sustainable industrial development that promotes clean energy solutions and reduces the environmental footprint of both production and consumption contributes to the preservation of natural resources, such as water, soil and biodiversity;

(b) Energy efficiency policies, technologies and practices, as well as countries having access to affordable renewable energy for the facilitation of productive activities will provide Member States with an opportunity to follow a low-carbon and low-emissions growth path;

[1] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018.
[2] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=668&menu=3170.
[3] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18173IDB_input_to_HLPF_2018.pdf.

(c) Efforts towards a low-carbon and low-emission growth path will enable smart industries and industrial clusters in urban industrial zones to achieve resource efficiency, and support countries to develop the required industrial competitiveness for local businesses in the global markets.

6. The HLPF 2019 will address the theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality", and will conduct an in-depth review of SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, and 16, in addition to the annually reviewed Goal 17.

III. UNIDO's activities in support of LDCs and the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III)

7. UNIDO is implementing the IDDA III roadmap to: (a) increase technical assistance programmes and projects for Africa's industrialization; (b) foster partnerships with relevant stakeholders on a national, regional and continental level for closer collaboration on key IDDA III priority areas; (c) enhance the visibility of the initiative through various global forum activities, as well as advocacy and outreach campaigns; and (d) assist with the mobilization of necessary resources for industrialization programmes on the continent.

8. Aligned to the roadmap, UNIDO is expanding the Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) approach to other African countries, in addition to cooperating with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the African Development Bank to promote agribusiness development within the African Agribusiness and Agro-industries Development Initiative (3ADI). Other cooperation enhancements include a new agreement signed with the African Union Commission to strengthen cooperation in line with Agenda 2063.

9. In September 2018, UNIDO co-organized a high-level meeting in the margins of the 73rd session of the General Assembly, which discussed the opportunities presented by IDDA III to expand trade and related capacities of Africa through enhanced industrial competitiveness. Continuing the advocacy of IDDA III, UNIDO and the European Investment Bank organized "Africa Day" on 22 November 2018 in Addis Ababa, which featured a panel discussion focused on the financing of industrialization programmes. UNIDO is implementing a "Championship Programme for IDDA III", through which IDDA III champions are being identified to support UNIDO in its IDDA III-related efforts.

10. UNIDO's operational strategy towards LDCs (2012–2020) is based on a three-dimensional approach and derives directly from the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (IPoA). The IPoA has the overarching goal to overcome the structural challenges faced by LDCs to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the LDC category. Specifically, the IPoA sets an ambitious objective of enabling half the number of LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020.

11. UNIDO is continuing its technical cooperation programmes in different fields, providing advisory services, organizing global forums geared towards LDCs, in addition to expanding its PCP model to LDCs in all regions and to collaborate with the United Nations Secretariat, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and other development partners in supporting LDCs on their path towards graduation.

12. Seventy per cent of LDCs, particularly in Africa, are currently being supported in environmental-related projects. UNIDO's programmes in this area are built on three pillars: industrial energy efficiency, renewable energy for productive uses, and climate policy and networks.

13. LDCs in Africa and in the Asia and the Pacific are also being supported in their industrial policy plans and strategies through tailored advisory services, including fostering of the inclusion of youth and women.

14. Bangladesh, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar fulfilled the graduation criteria for the first time in 2018, with Bangladesh and Myanmar meeting all three graduation thresholds.

IV. Action required of the Board

15. The Board may wish to take note of the information contained in the present document.

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